

of the alliance if it loses its focus and becomes mired in all manner of regional disputes. We should not be debating who and when. We should be debating how and why.

Mr. President, I take very seriously my responsibilities as a Member of the Senate to do what is best for America, what is best for our present troops that are protecting our security and the security of generations to come. How we approach our obligation to European security is a key part of the future security of the United States. We must establish our place in the world, our responsibilities in the world and make sure that we can cover those responsibilities with the strength and integrity that our word as the greatest superpower in the world should have. If we do this on a piecemeal basis, without laying the groundwork for the strength of this alliance, we could risk losing the alliance in the long term and we could risk losing the strength of America. I will not allow that to happen without at least speaking for what I think would maintain the place for America in the world, the strength of our country, and making sure that we have the ability to be the beacon for what is the best of people and that we have the strength to back it up. Our decision on the way we approach this alliance, this treaty, and the future of this alliance is key to the future of America.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. CRAIG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, let me associate myself with the remarks of the Senator from Texas. She is always very thoughtful on these issues and spends the time it must take to understand them. I appreciate, not only her concern, but what she is offering as a constructive approach toward what might otherwise be a very frustrating effort to expand NATO without, certainly, the consideration of the impact of that expansion.

Mr. President, this morning I come to the floor not to speak about NATO, so let me, at this time, ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak up to 40 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE CASE FOR TAX CUTS

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, America always rises to a challenge. We meet challenges readily and directly and would never ignore one knowingly as a country.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the greatest threat facing our Nation today would be the least visible. It is invisible because it originates behind our defenses. It does not come from a foreign country; it comes from our own. While it directly threatens our well-being, it dares not confront us directly. It uses Americans' good will and generosity against them. All of

this serves to make the threat more insidious and more dangerous.

Mr. President, the greatest threat facing America today is excessive taxation and with it a Washington culture that has transformed excessive into acceptable.

By any estimation, America's tax burden is excessive. Washington is projected to take \$1.68 trillion in taxes this year. No government in history has ever collected that much from its citizens. As an overall burden, that \$1.7 trillion amounts to 20.1 percent of the Nation's gross domestic product. One-fifth of everything produced in this country is consumed by this city, this Government, Washington, DC. That one-fifth is the highest overall tax burden since World War II, when America had committed itself to a total effort to win the greatest war in mankind's history.

Even then, under those most serious of circumstances, the tax burden placed on the Nation was only slightly larger than it is today. That burden lasted for just 2 years, 1944 and 1945. When the war was done, then the taxes returned to normal because this Congress made that happen because at that time we had not slipped into the culture of excessive taxation.

In contrast, today's tax burden shows no signs of ever ending, to the point that excessive taxation has come to be accepted as normal. Even after the tax cuts of last year have been fully implemented by the year 2003, the overall Federal tax burden will still amount to 19.5 percent, still one-fifth of everything produced in this country. The burden will still be higher than all but 2 years following World War II: 1969, when America was involved in war, and in 1981, when America was being wracked by runaway inflation.

Today we no longer see the specter of Hitler stalking across Europe; today we no longer are fighting in the jungles of Southeast Asia; today there is no runaway inflation; but today, and even more sadly, tomorrow, America is saddled with the same tax burden that used to be reserved only for calamities of the magnitude I have just spoken of.

Today's calamity is the tax burden itself. What once was effect is now cause. Let me repeat that: What once was effect is now cause. Last year Federal, State and local taxes took 38.2 percent of the income of the median two-earner family. It is bad enough that Washington, DC, takes one-fifth of what America produces. But it is intolerable that we are party to, and the principal cause of, taking two-fifths from America's families.

These are not just abstract numbers, folks. Meaningless? Not at all. They are not just something that someone with a green eyeshade or a calculator came up with. These are real dollars taken from real families who could spend them, save them, invest them in real things. The median dual-earning American family pays \$22,521—that is \$15,400 to Washington alone. That is

more than they pay in food costs, for housing, for clothing, or for medical care—combined. That is more than they have ever paid, and they must now work longer and harder than ever to pay it. It is no wonder that two must work when it takes two-fifths of a couple's earnings just to pay their taxes. In fact, one of those two working parents virtually is working entirely for Washington, DC, every day and every hour that spouse spends working, so that Washington politicians can simply spend and spend and spend.

Americans do not think it is fair, only Washington does. In a recent poll, 89 percent of Americans thought that the total tax burden for a family of four should not be any higher than 25 percent. That would mean Washington would still get a bigger portion of the family's earnings than each member of the family. Again, that's a statement worth repeating. Even with that figure, Washington still gets more of the money earned from the family than each member of the family gets.

Americans are a generous people and they thought it was fair that Washington get only 25 percent. Sadly, Washington, DC, does not. Without any war, any disaster, and with times good, Washington demands more than it ever has. Where will the money come from in the time of disaster then? Washington cannot afford a disaster, because America can now no longer afford Washington.

Somewhere along the way, the Federal Government lost its way. Washington has quietly and insidiously subverted the normal relationship that should exist between a state and a free people. Where excessive tax burdens were once relegated to abnormal circumstances, Washington now sees excessive as normal. Where wealth was once considered the property of those who created it, Washington now sees it as the property of those who tax it. Tax dollars have become Washington's dollars—not the rightful property of those from whom they are excessively taken, but the inalienable property of those to whom they are delivered. Only in Washington, DC, can a tax cut cause indignation, moral outrage that there exist people so selfish that they would dare to think their claim on their own earnings is more just than the claims of the bureaucrats and the politicians who wish to spend it.

It is not Washington's money. It is not Washington's money. Not one cent of it. It belongs to those who make it. We are not entitled to it. We are merely its stewards. Our claim to it does not outweigh that of those who earn it, their spouses, their children, their families.

Nor is it just money. To those who did not work for it, it is not real. They see it as a child might, understanding neither its origin nor its limits. What we diminish by calling it "taxes" is the work, the time, the property, the sacrifice and the very dreams of those who

earn it for themselves and their families. It is what is taken when Washington taxes excessively.

That people have a fundamental right to their time, their work and their property—none of us would deny this, and none of us would support a system whereby these things were taken. If the Nation commandeered an individual's time, it would rightfully be called a police state. In fact, when an individual's time is taken by imprisonment, it is in fact a police action that takes it. We ended the draft because we thought it was unfair to lay claim to a young man's life when there was no emergency of war facing this Nation. Yet, when the subject is money, Washington demands its portion even in the absence of an emergency.

Excessive taxation is no less than confiscation. When the Federal Government takes more than its share, it forces others to pay more than their share. What crime have those committed who are able to pay, that they can be taxed and taxed and taxed? They are guilty of nothing but success, of supporting themselves, of having created jobs for others, of having saved so that others might borrow and open businesses and create yet more jobs. In 1995 the top one-half of earners paid 95.4 percent of the total income tax of this country.

Is it any wonder, then, when we have so subverted the system that excess is normal and that the product of a person's labor is rightfully Washington's, that we have heinous abuses by the IRS? They cannot be excused, but perhaps partially explained, by the development of a culture that has come to see success as an indictment.

Excessive taxation is immoral. The power to tax is the power to destroy. Yet, when Daniel Webster and Chief Justice John Marshall said it, they could not have known how right they really were. The power to tax not only has the potential to destroy those who are taxed but also, in a much more subtle way, the recipient as well.

The American people demanded welfare reform not because they are mean-spirited, but because they recognize that no system can succeed that separates money from work. Nor should it. To an American, it is no less than immoral to get something for nothing. Washington finally recognized this in the case of welfare, but Washington has yet to apply that same principle to itself and to its taxes.

By separating revenue from the work and the success that created it, Washington comes to take money for granted. It begins to be more concerned with those who receive Government programs than with those who are actually paying for them. And in the ultimate travesty, it comes to stigmatize those who, by their hard work and success, can afford to pay.

In short, Washington becomes morally weakened by indolence, as does someone who lives perpetually on

someone else's work. It begins to take both the tax and the taxpayer for granted and, ultimately, it has come to resent the taxpayer as well.

Just as the power to tax is the power to destroy, so the reverse is true as well. The power to cut taxes is the power to create, to create higher wages, more and better jobs, homes, businesses, savings and investments.

In a free society and a free market, people decide where they want their money to go, and it will go where it will be most efficiently used. Raising taxes circumvents this process. Cutting taxes reinvigorates it.

Cutting taxes is not simply about leaving money with the individuals who created it, it is about leaving opportunities in communities. Washington spent more than \$5 trillion in constant 1993 dollars on welfare in the 30 years between 1965 and 1994. That figure is roughly the size of the entire national debt today. Yet, there was never a Federal program that could give an individual what Main Street America does day after day after day, and that is a meaningful job, a job that exists strictly because someone, under no compulsion, thought it was worthwhile to hire that person. No Government program can replace by giving what an employee earns by working.

Cutting taxes will put money not only where it belongs morally—with those who earned it—but where it belongs economically—into the Nation's economy. With this spur, the growth we need to meet our future commitments would be at hand. Money going to Washington today will do less to prepare us for our future than money staying with America's earners. If the people knew enough to create the wealth in the first place, why then should Washington know best what to do with it?

Finally, cutting taxes is necessary. We have the highest peacetime tax burden on the largest economy the world has ever known, and it still cannot support our current programs in the near future. Every credible analyst, both inside and outside of Government, knows that we cannot afford our entire entitlement programs tomorrow. Only politicians disagree. President Clinton's latest budget, according to CBO, contains \$128 billion in new spending. If we cannot afford today's programs tomorrow, how can we seriously consider adding more? We must first reform what we have.

In just 14 years, Social Security taxes will be unable to pay for benefits. The cost of both Medicare and Medicaid will shoot up. Tax increases will not possibly be able to pay for tomorrow's exploding costs without imploding the Nation's economy. If we follow the tax-hike route, we will not only not solve our problem, we will exacerbate it as slower economic growth leads to increased Federal costs.

In short, tax hikes are a treadmill to oblivion. That is why I offered an amendment last year to require a

supermajority in the Senate in order to raise taxes to pay for new spending.

Instead of tax hikes tomorrow, we need to cut taxes today. We need to begin preparing the economic foundation now for a time when the ratio of workers paying taxes to the retirees receiving benefits is smaller than at any time in our Nation's history. This means increasing economic growth, and that means increasing investment.

Investment does not come from Government, it comes from millions of men and women savings and from hundreds of thousands of businesses adding new equipment, things that cannot happen if the money needed for savings and investment in America is being consumed for spending right here in this city.

Taxes are excessive. Excessive taxes are confiscatory. This confiscation by excessive taxation is immoral, both because of what it does to the person for whom excessive taxes are taken, and also because of what it does to the recipient.

Excessive taxes are bad for the economy, and excessive taxes are unsustainable because of the fiscal path now charted by existing spending programs. In the face of this overwhelming evidence, what do the defenders of tax-and-spend-welfare state offer in return? The only thing they can: good intentions. But good intentions are not enough. Would you excuse those who deny you your money, your time, your property, the things you earned for your family, just because their intentions were good?

Would you excuse those who denied basic common sense just because they meant well? Of course not. But we find ourselves too often paralyzed by the good intentions of counterfeit compassion, a compassion that argues there is never enough of other people's money to pay for their good wishes, a compassion that holds there is nothing so noble as a gift from the Government and something suspicious about those who succeed on their own.

Good intentions should not be allowed to excuse Washington's indolence when it claims it cannot cut, that it cannot reform, that it cannot restrain the growth of programs it created so that people can keep more of what they have earned. Nor should Washington be allowed to say it cannot reform when it really means it will not reform.

Washington will not reform because it imagines that it knows better, better than the tens of millions of taxpayers, workers, employers, savers and investors, but Washington, ladies and gentlemen, is wrong.

Instead, Washington should be made to answer this very simple question: Why should those who did not earn, did not save and did not invest the money be more entitled to the returns it generates than those who did?

We must finally say to Washington what Washington has been saying to taxpayers for decades: Sacrifice a little

bit. We must fundamentally change how the Tax Code works. It can no longer be allowed to penalize people. It should not feed off of the system. It should offer rewards. And that is what we must recognize. We can no longer have a Tax Code that treats success as a crime to be punished instead of a goal to be emulated. We can argue over what would be the best tax reform, but we must agree that most suggestions for reform would do better than we are doing now with the current Tax Code.

We must simplify the system. It is bad enough that Washington takes more than it should without the additional insult of confusion. Last year, Americans spent \$230.4 billion just complying with the Federal Tax Code. You can call that wasted money—I call that wasted money. That is \$230.4 billion that Americans spent trying to stay within the law of the current Tax Code—a quarter of a trillion dollars, not paying taxes, just paying for the ability to pay taxes.

We must lower the excessive tax burden. It is not enough to say that taxes are excessively high and then satisfy ourselves with not reducing the burden. Shifting and simplifying the load is not enough; we have to reduce it, along with simplification. We must end the abuses. As bad as the current code is, it is made intolerable when it is abused.

In cases that we have heard in hearings in the Senate, we have seen the system not merely cross the line, but cross borders and time itself to become a system worthy of a totalitarian state of another time.

When America fears its Government, as America fears the IRS, something is wrong. This is beyond unacceptable, and it has to be stopped. We must do whatever it takes to make sure that it does and that it never returns.

To understand our duty in this, we must first look not to the Tax Code but back to America's foundations. Perhaps we in Idaho, my home State, have the advantage of doing this a little more clearly than some. Ours is a relatively new State of the Union, so perhaps we have a bit clearer view of the intention or the role that Government should take and the role that it ought to play in taxation.

No one was ever inspired to come to America to work for someone else, and certainly not for Washington, DC. They came to work for themselves. People did not cross oceans, and later prairies, in search of a Government program. They came in search of opportunity. Today, we have a Tax Code that takes that opportunity away and makes their search endless.

This country was not founded on a dream of paying excessive taxes. Rather, our country arose from a rebellion against paying excessive taxes. Today, we have a Government—not in London but right here in Washington, run not by a king but by ourselves—that demands from our citizens what our forefathers rejected.

America was not founded on an ideal of relative freedom but on the principles we believe to be absolutes. Excessive taxes are wrong, and the taxes we now pay as Americans are excessive. This is absolutely wrong. It does not matter that other governments exist in other places that demand even more excessive taxes of their citizens. Our standard was never those, and it never should be. America's goal was always to lead and not to follow, and one does not lead by looking back at those who lag behind but forward to the goals that beckon us.

There is no more basic test of Government than what it demands of its citizens. Failure to tax fairly is the worst of Government itself. Because taxpayers are honest, we must be prudent. Because taxpayers work hard, we must remind ourselves that they, not Washington, are entitled to the reward of those works. We are but stewards of their money and they trust us to use it properly. Sadly, we are abusing this trust through excessive taxes.

In governing, we should never use the trust that our people give us against the people themselves.

Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). The Senator has 13 minutes 20 seconds.

NATIONAL SAFE PLACE WEEK

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I would like to bring one other issue before the Senate today. I am talking about "National Safe Place Week." I rise today to thank my colleagues for passing Senate Resolution 96, which designates this week, March 15 through 21, as "National Safe Place Week."

I am truly pleased that the Senate agrees that Project Safe Place is a valuable community resource which deserves our attention and our recognition.

Project Safe Place is a unique union of community agencies and the private sector that promotes the well-being of our Nation's troubled youth. It is an innovative program of nonresidential community locations where youth who are at risk or in crisis situations can obtain help quickly and find shelter if necessary.

The mission of Project Safe Place is to cultivate community involvement, to combat adolescent crime and substance addiction, and to help youth who are abused, threatened, lost or scared, or in an unsafe situation.

Since its creation in 1983, in Louisville, KY, the scope of Project Safe Place has spread to include more than 8,000 Safe Places nationwide, and more than 27,000 young people have sought help at these locations. We all agree that our Nation's youth are our most valuable resource. In our largest cities and our smallest towns, this resource is threatened every minute of every day and every week.

The threats are truly enormous. Every 4 minutes in this country, a

youth is arrested for alcohol-related crimes. Every 7 minutes, a youth is arrested for drug-related crimes. And every 2 hours, a youth's life is snuffed out prematurely, making homicide the No. 2 killer of 10- to 14-year-olds, usually with alcohol and drug abuse as the major factor in the violent act that took the life. Nearly half of all adolescent murders and between 20 and 35 percent of adolescent suicides are directly linked to alcohol and to drug abuse. Despite all of our efforts, alcohol and drug abuse among teenagers continues to rise.

Child abuse and neglect also threaten our children. In 1995, Child Protection Service agencies reported that more than 1 million children were abused and neglected, and in the same year almost 1,000 children were known to have died as a result of abuse or neglect. Just like drug abuse, incidents of child abuse are increasing. Between 1986 and 1993—a span of only 7 years—substantiated reports rose by 67 percent.

Another threat to the safety of our children is the temptation to run away from these problems rather than facing them head on. Most runaway youth are not running to some thing; rather, they are running away from family problems, drug problems, or physical or sexual abuse. Unfortunately, runaways find out quickly that their solution can only bring about more problems for themselves. In order to survive on the streets, runaways typically turn to "survival sex," theft, panhandling, or drugs—either selling them to pay for food and shelter or taking them to relieve their pain.

All this paints a pretty dark picture for our Nation's youth. But there is hope. For many troubled teens—over 27,000 of them in fact—this Safe Place sign that you see here serves as a beacon—a beacon of hope, a beacon of opportunity, a beacon which points to the first step in a long and sometimes difficult but necessary road to salvation.

Here is how it works. Here is what the sign means. Here is what is behind the sign. Say you are a teenager with a major problem. You see the Safe Place sign outside of your local fast-food restaurant and you decide that you need help with whatever you are facing. You walk in. It is busy. But as soon as you mention Safe Place and ask an employee for help, you are taken into the back, where there is a quiet and comfortable situation and, most important, away from any of your friends who might happen to be in the restaurant or wonder what you are doing there.

You do not know it, but the employee you have talked to is already on the phone to the local youth shelter. The shelter calls back to tell the employee the name of the counselor who is already on his or her way, and within minutes the volunteer, who is the same gender as you, will arrive to talk with you and transport you back to a shelter if you want counseling and a safe place to stay. If you decide to go to the shelter, counselors will be there to help